

Illinois awarded \$16 million grant to fight opioid crisis

April 25 2017 4:45 PM



SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) was awarded a federal grant for over \$16 million to fight Illinois’ opioid crisis. The grant is funded through the 21st Century Cures Act which includes an estimated \$1 billion to states over the next two years to combat the nation’s opioid crises. Grants will be administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration under the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant program.

“As has been the case nationally, Illinois has been severely impacted by the opioid epidemic. This significant investment will strengthen state-wide services and expand access to treatment and overdose prevention programs in Illinois,” said IDHS Secretary James Dimas. “These resources will provide a comprehensive array of prevention, treatment and recovery services through evidence-based public health solutions that will combat the opioid and heroin crises in our communities.”

The grant supports new treatment and recovery services, including the establishment of an Opioid Crisis Line and expanded medication-assisted treatment for individuals with opioid use disorder. The funding will also support opioid-related enhancements to the Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), the launch of a statewide opiate awareness campaign, new pilot programs to provide medications to treat opioid use disorder, and pre-release and post-release services for individuals who are incarcerated in county jails. In addition, this award will support a widespread expansion of the training of first responders to an opioid overdose and the availability of the overdose reversal medication Naloxone, commonly referred to as Narcan.

Drug overdose deaths in this country nearly tripled from 1999 to 2014. Among the 47,055 drug overdose deaths that occurred in the U.S. in 2014, 28,647 (60.9 percent) involved an opioid. Like many states, Illinois has recently experienced a notable increase in drug overdose deaths that can primarily be attributed to an increase in opioid overdose deaths. Provisional death records data obtained from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) show 2,278 drug-related overdose deaths during 2016. This represents a 44.3 percent increase over the 1,579 drug-related overdose deaths that were reported by IDPH for 2013. Through the Illinois Opioid Crisis Response Advisory Council, The Illinois Department of Human Services and many other state agencies are coordinating the state's efforts to develop a statewide opioid epidemic preparedness and prevention strategy.